

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES
August 22, 2007

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded.

Members Present:

John Knox White
Michael Krueger
Robb Ratto
Robert McFarland

Absent:

Eric Schatmeier
Srikant Subramaniam
Neilson Tam

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer
Barry Bergman, Transportation Coordinator

2. **AGENDA CHANGES**

There were none.

3. **APPROVAL OF JULY 25, 2007 MINUTES**

Commissioner Krueger moved approval of the minutes for the July 25, 2007, meeting minutes.
Commissioner Ratto seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Krueger advised that the Line 63 subcommittee met, and went over the short-medium- and long-term options for the line. City staff and AC Transit would follow up on some of the details, with a full explanation of the alternatives and how they were narrowed down. That report would be brought forward in September.

Chair Knox White attended the previous City Council meeting, and the item regarding the changes to the Alameda Municipal Code was continued. The actual language changes of the Code would probably be brought before the Transportation Commission in September.

Commissioner Krueger inquired why the item was continued. *Chair Knox White* believed the City Manager wanted the Transportation Commission to look at the specific language in the proposed changes before it went to the City Council.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. Project Update: I-880 Operational and Safety Improvements at 29th Avenue and 23rd Avenue

Staff Khan presented the staff report, and noted that the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) and the project consultant (Kimley-Horn) were present in the audience.

Matt Todd, Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, made a presentation and summarized the background and scope of this program. He detailed the funding sources and plans for this program for the Park Street Triangle. He noted that they would detail the life of the project and the project study report.

Garrett Wright, RBF Engineering, detailed the CalTrans development process and the actions that would be taken in Phases I, II and III. He noted that the team was transitioning from Phase I to II, and would embark upon more in-depth environment technical and engineering studies. He noted that the purpose of the project was mobility on I-880. He added that there was identification of a bottleneck in the northbound direction, and that there were many accidents in the area; he added that there were geometric constraints. The project's basis was to examine those existing conditions; he added that there was non-standard interchange spacing, particularly at 29th and 23rd. He noted that two structures at 23rd and one at 29th did not meet current CalTrans design standards for vertical clearance. The structure at 23rd has been hit three times in the last three years by oversized vehicles. He displayed the map of the area and described the specifics of the traffic flows and challenges. He noted that there were many accidents in the area, occurring at roughly seven times the statewide average for similar configurations; the majority were rear-end accidents. The auxiliary lane by the Shell gas station near Lisbon Avenue is very short, which does not allow much time or distance to accelerate in the fast-moving traffic. He noted that part of the freeway was a horizontal curve, with very little distance to merge; this area had an accident rate of 10 times the state average. He noted that they were roughly half sideswipes and rear-end accidents.

Mr. Wright described the two on-ramps entering I-880 at 23rd Avenue, and noted that they were relatively close to each other on a horizontal curve. The accident rate in this area was nine times the statewide average. He noted that the three areas he described were their main targets for the project. They intended to solve the merging problems, improve sight distance and the entrance/exit to the freeway, which would increase the mobility of the main line. He noted that the southbound direction had operational and safety problems, featuring a short auxiliary lane for

entrance and exit. He noted that the project did not encompass that direction due to funding and right of way complications. He noted that they would accommodate future widening that would occur along the southbound lanes. He noted that each phase is capable of being constructed independently of the other phases. Their goal was to construct all four phases at the same time, however, with the funding constraints, subsets of the project will be constructed in a way that would be complementary to the entire project.

Mr. Wright displayed and described each phase in detail.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether there was any current access to the Park Street Bridge from northbound I-880 at 29th. *Mr. Wright* indicated that there is no direct access. He displayed the legal movement of cars in that direction, and noted some of the shortcuts that people used, and noted that signage and striping attempted to stop the illegal turns.

Commissioner McFarland asked how many people exiting I-880 at 29th were using the Miller-Sweeney (Fruitvale) Bridge. *Mr. Wright* replied that they did a license plate survey, logging all of the people who exited from 29th, as well as those prior to getting onto the Fruitvale Bridge. He noted that less than 10%, a total of 24 vehicles, was the maximum that made that movement during the times that were studied.

Commissioner Ratto noted that he was concerned about anything that would push traffic to the Park Street Bridge, which he believed is currently over utilized, and away from the Miller-Sweeney Bridge, which he believed was the most underused entrance to Alameda. He liked the plan and believed it was well-engineered, but did not like the ability to come off the off-ramp and go onto the new structure, making the left-hand turn to go directly into Alameda via Park Street.

Open public hearing.

Jon Spangler, 1037 San Antonio, noted that he rode his bike regularly from his home to Fruitvale BART, and had done that many times over the 29th Street and Park Street Bridges. He inquired whether either overpass will improve bicycle access on I-880 to and from Alameda and Oakland. He believed it was ludicrous to embark on this amount of work without having real access for pedestrians and bicyclists, and did not see any provisions for them in the updates. He was very concerned for the congestion on the Park Street Bridge mentioned by *Commissioner Ratto*. He believed the traffic should be directed more equitably and more directly at the same time into and out of Alameda. He noted that since the Park Street Triangle was already at LOS "F", he believed some of this would be prohibitive, and would like further clarification.

Mike McMahon noted that he was a West End resident who traveled on northbound I-880 frequently. He described his route to City Hall via I-880 to Broadway, and noted that he generally got off the freeway as soon as he encountered traffic. He believed that an alternative on 29th Street would not increase frequency for him, and would appreciate an easier way to use High

Street to Miller-Sweeney Bridge. With respect to Phase 4, he inquired how people going over 23rd Street passing east would be able to get into Oakland. He believed that getting off 23rd Street was a scary scenario.

Close public hearing.

Commissioner Ratto expressed concern about cars exiting from 29th, and funneling toward the Park Street Bridge into the Park Street Triangle, basically abandoning the Miller-Sweeney Bridge from northbound I-880.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Krueger* regarding other access option from northbound I-880 to Fruitvale, Mr. Wright replied that there were no current plans to increase access on Fruitvale from northbound I-880.

Staff Khan noted that regarding *Commissioner Ratto's* concerns about the 23rd exit, this was part of the concerns that staff was addressing with CMA, Oakland, ACTIA and CalTrans. He noted that the changes in access to Alameda will be included as part of the traffic analysis.

Mr. Wright noted that of the people exiting the northbound ramp at 23rd, about 75% of them continue in the eastbound direction, and 25% go westbound on 23rd. He noted that the proposal of the hook off-ramp was intended to accommodate easy access, and described the balance of pros and cons of the hook ramp, versus the length of the auxiliary lane.

Commissioner Krueger inquired how much of the issues with respect to the capacity of the Park Street Bridge access was due to congestion on Park Street itself, on the bridge, and in the Triangle area. He believed the congestion was largely on the Oakland side. *Mr. Wright* noted that the intersections sometimes operated at LOS "F" during the day, and that there was traffic breakdown occurring, largely to do with traffic weaving on Ford from the bridge to 23rd, as well as cars from 29th competing for the same piece of pavement.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether the freeway was at grade for this segment. *Mr. Wright* replied that there were no underpasses. He noted that there would be bike lanes and sidewalks in both directions on 29th, and described the pedestrian, bike and car access improvements for each site, particularly children being brought to school in the Jingtown neighborhood.

Chair Knox White inquired about the public hearing process going forward, as well as what environmental document would be created. *Mr. Wright* replied that it would be an EIR, and noted that technical studies would be done, including noise, air and traffic. He noted that a public hearing would be held for people to listen to a similar presentation as this, and for them to provide their comments. Formal comments would then be accepted after that.

Chair Knox White requested that Phases 2, 3 and 4, as well as the 29th Street on-ramp, include a public comment period before the Transportation Commission or some other entity in Alameda. He inquired how the numbering of the phases would be related to the funding process. *Mr. Todd*

noted that there was a “down payment” of \$17 million, and that the allocation of the monies had not yet been determined. He was unsure whether the money for Phase 1 would be available to begin the work.

Mr. Todd noted that accidents were the cause of approximately 40-60% of most congestion, and that they planned to ease the choke points to the West End and the Posey/Webster Tubes.

Chair Knox White believed that the phases should not be treated as a single project, and that there should be coordination in the project, particularly regarding Phases 2 and 3.

Chair Knox White believed that this project would disrupt normal commute patterns into Alameda, and noted that if the project is to move forward, he would like to see CMA make a commitment to invest in improving access to the Mitchell-Sweeney Bridge.

Commissioner Ratto requested a copy of the presentation, and while he liked the project, he wished to make his concern about the 29th Avenue ramp known.

No action was taken.

7B. Election of Transportation Commission Chair and Vice Chair
Outcome: Election of Chair and Vice Chair

<i>Commissioner Ratto</i> moved to nominate <i>John Knox White</i> as Chair of the Transportation Commission. <i>Commissioner Krueger</i> seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

<i>Commissioner McFarland</i> moved to nominate <i>Robb Ratto</i> as Vice-Chair of the Transportation Commission. <i>Commissioner Krueger</i> seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Khan advised that the September meeting would have a very full agenda, and noted that the Line 63 recommendation would be brought forward at that meeting. There will also be a presentation about the annual Alameda Ferry transit plan. Staff expected the parking study to come before the Commission. The cooperative agreement with AC Transit has moved forward, and staff should be able to finalize their comments shortly.

Staff Khan proposed that a permanent item regarding the Broadway-Jackson project be created under Staff Communications.

Staff Khan advised that the changes to the Alameda Municipal Code would be heard during the September meeting.

Staff Bergman advised that on September 10, 2007, Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker would hold a presentation at the Alameda Library to address the Webster Street Tube lighting issue, from 7 to 9 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

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